



(For pre-Christmas Release)

(573) 751-5401

## **EXTEND THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT, “TREECYCLE” YOUR HOLIDAY TREE**

JEFFERSON CITY, MO, DEC. 24, 2003 --- As the excitement of the holidays begins to wane, it is time to consider what to do with your Christmas tree.

If it is a natural tree, it can only stand around just so long before the needles start falling and it becomes a fire hazard. If it is a metallic or plastic tree that appears worn out by one too many Christmas parties, it might be time to “treecycle.”

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources’ [How to Dispose of Christmas Trees](#) brochure has several tips on how to reuse a natural Christmas tree or find a beneficial use for an artificial tree after the holiday ends.

With a little imagination, retired trees of each type can be used to extend the Christmas spirit. Since January 1992, it has been illegal to dispose of natural Christmas trees in landfills. Lights, glass ornaments, tinsel and other decorations should be completely removed before starting a “treecycle” project.

- To help out your neighborhood birds and wildlife, set the old tree up in the backyard as a banquet table. Hanging edible decorations such as suet, peanut butter balls, ears of corn or clusters of birdseed may attract a colorful and entertaining gathering of birds and squirrels to your backyard. The tree will still be waste material in the spring, but you can squeeze a little reuse from it before then.
- Weighed down by stone, a collection of trees at the bottom of a pond can benefit fish habitat by providing cover for small fish and places for their food species to cling until feeding time.
- If you have the room, you may discard natural trees to create brush piles. Stacked trees can provide shelter against winter winds and ice for small animals and birds. Over time, brush

piles break down and decay into compost that can enrich the soil. You can speed up the composting process by running the tree through a chipper and using the mulch around plants to conserve soil moisture.

Many communities offer a Christmas tree collection and chipping service after Christmas. Check with your local government or your solid waste management district for the location and schedules of these services. For district contact names and numbers, check this Web page: <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/alpd/swmp/swab/PLANLIST.pdf>, or call the department's Solid Waste Management Program at (573) 751-5401.

Although artificial trees last much longer, disposal options are more limited. Ultimately a worn out artificial tree must go to a landfill. Or you may want to consider using it as an outdoor Christmas decoration next year.

For copies of the *How to Dispose of Christmas Trees* brochure, contact the department's Outreach and Assistance Center by calling 1-800-361-4827 or visit the department's Web site at <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/oac/pubs.htm>.

For more information on recycling or other solid waste management issues, visit <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/alpd/swmp/homeswmp.htm>.

For news releases on the Web, visit [http://www.dnr.mo.gov/newsrel/nr\\_list.htm](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/newsrel/nr_list.htm).

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